

54-9

410010

762a.52/3-150

XR 761.5262a

State: Patch from Bremen

Subj: Russia Presses her "Aktion West" Program of  
Counter Intelligence

March 1, 1950

To: Dept. of State

From: BREMEN 135 March 1, 1950

The February 17 issue of the Essener TAGEBLATT states that a band of Former German SS members, ex-Intelligence men and army experts has been loosed upon Western Germany to infiltrate the country in the guise of reporters, press agents, students and refugees and report whatever can be gleaned to the Soviet's new State Security Office in the Eastern Zone of Berlin. These men, selected from Russia's war prisoners, have been carefully screened and trained and constitute a part of the Soviet's new counter intelligence group to carry out their so-called "Action West" program.

The newspaper reports that for some time Russia has been busily gathering her forces for her "Action West" drive. General MERKULOW, chief of the Soviet Secret Service for Middle Europe and his aides, Major TRUCHANOW and Captain ALUKIR, have conferred daily with Dr. Kurt FISCHER, head of the People's Police, in connection with this new Ministry for State Security, which works closely with the MVD. General Merkulow refers to former counter intelligence activities as "a children's game". He advocated the use of the former SS men and German army officials and started a special course for SED officials at the Police School at Dessau-Kochstaedt. Lenin Academy at Moscow, at which Dr. STEINHOFF, minister for the Interior was trained, the TAGEBLATT reported, furnishes special study courses. Paul MARKGRAF, former chief of police, Colonel Wilhelm ADAM, former aide of Marshal PAULUS, former SS Obergruppenfuehrer Walter MUELLER, SS Standartenfuehrer Adalbert BAEUMLER and Colonel ROSENTRERER, former chief of the Counter Intelligence Division of the German High Command, all holders of the Knight's Cross, have taken the course. Baeumler, now in East Berlin, is considered the potential chief of counter intelligence for the Zone. The newspaper pointed out that for the first time names like Baeumler, Walter Mueller, Colonel Rosentreter, Colonel Adam, have been mentioned behind the Iron Curtain and the public has learned of the existence of the school for activists for ex-German officers, at Krasnogorsk, under Colonel WOELFFLE. Colonel Woelffle was a holder of the Knight's Cross.

The paper went on to say that until recently only a handful of members of the National Committee for a Free Germany has been included in the East Zone administration but well known names are noted to be creeping into the picture such as ex-Colonel LUITPOLD STEIDLE, now Minister of Labor in the Eastern Zone, Major BECHLER, who was the Minister for Interior in the Brandenburg government, Major General Dr. ERICH KORFES, chairman of the National Front in Brandenburg, and Major General ARNO VON LENSKE, Chairman of the Berlin National Democratic Party. These men, the newspaper concluded, will no doubt act as front men while the real work of the organization will be carried out by the trained ex-German officers.